

## PRACTICE OF THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY

As already mentioned, this method of meditation is based on The Sublime Eightfold Way, as taught by the Buddha. (KS Vol. 5: 7-9)

It is very important to understand that this technique of meditation is a method of transforming oneself from a **self-centered** personality into a **selfless** one, by following the Supernormal Eight-fold Way. There are eight steps to be followed. They are as follows:

1. Harmonious Perspective (*sammā-ditthi*)
2. Harmonious Orientation (*sammā-sankappa*)
3. Harmonious Speech (*sammā-vācā*)
4. Harmonious Action (*sammā-kammanta*)
5. Harmonious Lifestyle (*sammā-ājīva*)
6. Harmonious Exercise (*sammā-vāyāma*)
7. Harmonious Attention (*sammā-sati*)
8. Harmonious Mental Equilibrium (*sammā-samādhi*)

The first step is to acquire the harmonious perspective. The harmonious perspective is the perspective that brings about harmony internally and externally. This is a perspective, not merely a right view or a right understanding. This is a different way of looking at life, yourself, the world, and your relationship to the world. It is seeing things in a different way that does not create conflict internally or externally.

Even Charles Darwin the originator of the modern theory of evolution saw **life as a struggle for existence**. It needed the evolution of a Buddha to realize that this struggle was only a **mistake**, for it was **an effort to be permanent in an**

**impermanent world.** This struggle, however, occurred quite unconsciously and deterministically. No one was responsible for it. Even after the evolution of the thinking human being, this futile effort is continued quite unconsciously through blind emotions. This struggle stands out in the human being as a conflict between blind emotions and the rational intelligence that is aware of reality. It needed the evolution of a Buddha, however, to see this mistake and realize that the cause of the problem was the blind emotions that clashed with the reality conceived by intelligence. This distressful conflict is what the Buddha called suffering (*dukkha*).

There are three kinds of conflict that emotions come up with:

1. With nature
2. With people
3. With reason

It was to resolve this conflict by eliminating the blind emotions that the Buddha found this Sublime Eightfold Way.

# THE SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY IN DETAIL

## The Harmonious Perspective (*sammā-ditthi*)

This perspective is to become aware of:

- i. **The insecurity of life** (*dukkha*)
- ii. The **cause** of this **insecurity** (*samudaya*)
- iii. The **end** of this **insecurity** (*nirodha*)
- iv. The **way to end** this **insecurity** (*magga*).

The insecurity of life was what Siddhatta Gotama, the Bodhisatta, realized more than twentyfive centuries ago, when he saw the old man, the sick man, and the dead corpse. In modern times, the Western philosophy called Existentialism has dramatically drawn attention to this problem. Yet no one so far has been able to solve this problem in the modern world. It was only the Buddha, 25 centuries ago in the East, who found the solution by awakening from the dream of existence. He found the way to immortality and revealed it to the world, but only those with ears to hear, and only those with a little dust in their eyes, could listen and be free from death. He set out to enlighten the world, beating the drum of immortality (*amata dundubin*), with the words:

**“Open is the door to immortality**

For those who have ears to hear

Listen to my sound and be free from death.”

The sound of the drum is still ringing – )))

Only those who pay attention will hear

Only those with little dust in their eyes will see

Of course some thinkers have found an escape from this stark reality of death in the fantasy of a dream world, called Heaven, where there is eternal life and eternal happiness after death, even though this fantasy is far beyond verifiable certainty, until death intervenes – because it cannot be verified

The Buddha, on the other hand, sought a real solution to the real problem within reality itself, instead of escaping into a fantasy beyond certainty. He examined the existential problem of death here and now to find a solution here and now. His aim was to find the cause of the problem, and to solve the problem by eliminating the cause.

What he discovered was that the cause of the problem, and its solution, was to be found within oneself and not outside. The cause was our blind emotions that come in conflict with the reality perceived through our intellect. This conflict that caused much suffering could be resolved only by eliminating the cause which is these blind emotions. Elimination of emotions could be achieved only by finding the conditions essential for the arousal of emotions.

He discovered that these emotions are aroused deterministically, and therefore it was only by eliminating one of the necessary conditions that the emotional arousal could be stopped. Such an elimination of emotions was a transcendence of normal human nature, and the realization of a Supernormal Consciousness. This realization also resulted in a **paradigm shift** from the notion of “**personal existence**” to the notion of “**impersonal experience,**” ending in **absolute selflessness.**

It is to achieve this **transcendence** that Buddhist meditation is practiced at Level III by the monastic followers. The lay Buddhist leading a secular life can also benefit from

this practice, however, because it helps one learn to gain control over the emotions that stand as an obstacle to peaceful living.

Those who understand that emotion is the culprit that stands responsible for the sufferings of life, begin to eliminate emotion at every nook and cranny. This is what begins the important reorientation of life.

### **Harmonious Orientation (*sammā-sankappa*)**

This is the reorganization of one's life, by turning in a new direction, recognizing the value of calmness of mind. It is to turn towards calmness or freedom from emotional excitements, as the solution to the problem of life. This U-turn in life has to be taken by visualizing and appreciating the harmonious goal, which is calmness. This reorientation can occur only if one understands the danger, futility and mental confusion resulting from the pursuit of sensual pleasure, and the advantage of the pursuit of renunciation, relaxation, and tranquility of mind. In the present age, this can also be seen as the understanding of the meaning and value of stress management.

Relaxation and tranquility must be seen as the medial path between self-indulgence and self-denial. It is the way to true goodness, happiness, and wisdom. Commonly people see happiness as the gratification of emotional impulses. They see goodness as the denial of emotional impulses. Therefore being good is the opposite of being happy. This is why people prefer to be happy than to be good. They hate to be good. They even look down upon people who try to be good because they see them as cowards, who fear to gratify their emotions out of a feeling of guilt, or fear of punishment. People who often prefer to appear to be good are those who have been brought up under

strict discipline during childhood. Such people often become criminals when they grow up to show off their power.

People who turn to be bad to show off their power were shown by the Buddha that goodness is not denial of emotions and bad is not gratification of emotions. He pointed out that goodness is the way to happiness and badness is the way to unhappiness. He pointed out that gratification of emotions is not the way to happiness; nor is it the suppression of emotions or even repression. Happiness is the complete elimination of emotions. He pointed out that emotions can be eliminated and there is nothing wrong in doing so. It only makes one transcend the normal emotional level of being. It is rising up to a supernormal level, which is called the Sublime (*ariya*) level.

Self-indulgence (*kāma sukhallikānu yoga*) is being carried away by emotional impulses, and self-denial (*atta kilamatānu yoga*) is the attempt to conquer the flesh by flagellation and other methods of self-torture. Avoiding these two extremes the Buddha pointed out a medial way to deal with emotions. Instead of expressing emotions in action or even suppressing or repressing emotions, one can learn to relax the body and calm the mind.

What this means is, every emotional arousal creates muscular tension in the body. This tension makes the body uncomfortable. It is to get rid of this discomfort that the body releases tension in action, quite unconsciously, to obtain what is desired, or to get rid of what is hated, or to run away from what is feared, or even weep when nothing can be done. Every emotional action is an unconscious release of tension. If this is so, instead of unconsciously releasing tension in action, we can always learn to consciously relax the tension and be happy

all the time. Happiness therefore is none other than the relaxed state of the body and the tranquil state of the mind.

Emotion is a disturbance of the body caused by the pictures we hold in the mind. By learning to relax the body, and to hold calming images in the mind, it is possible to free the mind of emotional disturbances. This means visualizing calmness is the medial way between expression and suppression or repression of emotions to overcome emotions. To visualize calmness, is to make calmness the goal towards which we move.

It is also helpful to understand the distinction between pleasure and happiness. Pleasure is derived from the stimulation of the senses, where as happiness is the undisturbed tranquility of mind. It is only when one has understood that calmness is the only true value of life that the body and mind will become reorganized to reach this goal.

Pursuit of calmness is the medial path between the pursuit of pleasure and the pursuit of goodness. Being carried away by emotions is the pursuit of pleasure (*kāma sukhallikānu yoga*). Attempting to suppress the emotions is the pursuit of goodness (*atta kilamatānu yoga*). Learning to relax is the pursuit of calm or tranquility of mind (*adhi cittanu yoga*), or the pursuit of the Supernormal Mind – NIRVANA.

This means, when properly oriented, we begin to gain control over our emotions, instead of being carried away by them, and we begin to act rationally. In other words, we begin to stop reacting to situations in life, and start responding to them. A reaction is unconscious and emotional, while a response is conscious and rational. This means we think, feel, and act rationally instead of emotionally, which is to maintain a good disposition that maintains happiness within oneself, as well as in others, wherever we go.

This is the perfect orientation, which is to be oriented towards the new and supreme goal of **imperturbable serenity of mind** (*akuppā-ceto-vimutti*), called Nirvāna. This healthy orientation results in the withdrawal from bad dispositions and the cultivation of good dispositions.

<b>Bad Disposition</b>	<b>Good Disposition</b>
1. Passionate	1. Dispassionate
2. Angry	2. Loving
3. Cruel	3. Kind

With this healthy orientation comes a complete reorganization of one's life, where one's speech, action, and lifestyle changes to calm and composed way of life that is pleasant to oneself as well as to all others that one encounters.

### 1) **Harmonious Speech** (*sammā-vācā*)

This is speech that does not create conflict between oneself and others, but instead creates happiness wherever one goes.

<b>Bad Speech</b>	<b>Good Speech</b>
1. Dishonesty in speech	1. Honesty in speech
2. Disloyalty in speech	2. Loyalty in speech
3. Discourteous speech	3. Courteous speech
4. Harmful, idle speech	4. Harmless, helpful speech



## 2) Harmonious Action (*sammā-kammanta*)

This is our behaviour that is always pleasant to ourselves as well as to others.

<b>Bad Action</b>	<b>Good Action</b>
1. Disrespect for living-beings	1. Respect for living-beings
2. Plundering others property	2. No plundering others property
3. Immoral sensual enjoyment	3. Moral sensual enjoyment

## 3) Harmonious Lifestyle (*sammā-ājīva*)

Here we are referring to our lifestyle, more than the jobs we do to earn a living, or our occupation. The harmonious life style is the unselfish, friendly, honest, compassionate, and tolerant way of living that is helpful but not harmful to anyone in the world. This is the automatic consequence of the harmonious disposition. It is possible to speak good words or do good actions occasionally but have a bad life style, where one gets angry and greedy often, and even being hated by others for one's behaviour. If one has a good life style one will always be good, honest and helpful, and will be loved by everyone.

When a person has successfully completed the practice up to this point, he has become a stream entrant (*sotā panna*). A stream entrant is one who has entered the stream. The stream is the Sublime Eightfold Way. This is the stream that ultimately falls into the ocean – Nirvana. To become a stream entrant one has to break three, out of the ten bonds that bind one to existence or being (*bhava*). These three bonds are:

- Personality perspective (*sakkaya ditthi*)
- Cognitive dissonance (*vicikicca*)
- Heteronomous morality (*silabbata paramasa*)

The personality perspective is broken when one has understood the **Fourfold Sublime Reality**, which is the understanding of the **insecurity of life**, its **cause**, its **end**, and the **way** to its end. When this has been understood in the proper way, the “notion of self” is intellectually discarded, because the Buddha pointed out that the insecurity, in short, consists of the five personalized gatherings (*panca-upādānakkhandā*): images, feelings, sensations, constructions, and perceptions. The five gatherings are intellectually depersonalized at this point. Yet the emotional “sense of self” still remains. Though one understands that it is wrong, the “feeling of self” still remains.

The cognitive dissonance is due to the emotions and reason being at loggerheads: reasoning indicates that there is no “self,” but emotion feels the “self.” This dissonance is experienced even in the behaviour. One intellectually accepts the five precepts as good behaviour and even sets out to practice it, but when overcome by anger or lust one breaks the virtuosity.

Heteronomous morality is when one behaves morally only to please others or because others or the law wants one to be moral. Even morality based on obedience to God is not free from this allegation. The stream entrant is the only one who is free from this error because he has understood the need for morality, which is to establish peace and happiness within oneself as well in the world outside.

The practice up to this point is the work of the beginner’s retreat, Level I. In the beginner’s retreat we practiced selective thinking to eliminate the five hindrances. In this level II retreat

we learn to eliminate the hindrances fully and enter the ecstasies (jhana)

#### **4) Harmonious Exercise (sammā-vāyāma)**

It is here that the intermediate retreat begins. It is the systematic effort to purify the mind. When this exercise is successfully completed, the purified mind enters the first ecstasy (jhana), which is followed by the second, third, and fourth.

This exercise comprises four parts:

**Prevention** (*saṅvara*),

**Elimination** (*pahāna*),

**Cultivation** (*bhāvanā*), and

**Maintenance** (*anurakkhana*).

##### **I) Prevention (*saṅvara*)**

The impurities or hindrances enter the mind through the senses. They enter when we focus our attention on the sensory objects. To **prevent** this we withdraw our attention from sensory objects, which is to stop reflecting on the pleasantness or the unpleasantness of the object. This is called guarding the senses. Let us examine the words of the Buddha in translation, as it is found in the Sutta.

Herein, a meditator, seeing an image with the eye, is not preoccupied with what is seen or with what is associated with it, so that attraction, repulsion and evil, unprofitable states of mind may not flow into the mind, as it would if one dwelled with this eye-faculty uncontrolled, and did not apply oneself to such control, or set guard over the eye-faculty.

Hearing a sound with the ear, or smelling an odour with the nose, or tasting a savour with the tongue, or contacting tangibles with the body, or cognising mental states with the mind, one is not preoccupied with their general features, or by their associations so that attraction, repulsion and evil, unprofitable states of mind may not flow upon one, as it would, if one dwelled with ones ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind uncontrolled and did not apply oneself to such control, or set guard over these faculties.

This, in fact, is a withdrawal of attention from what ever is perceived through the senses. It is closing our mind to external objects perceived. This way we are being free of disturbances within due to environmental influences. In other words, we are preventing the mind from being polluted by forces coming from outside. This way we also stop reacting to stimulation of the senses by the environment.

## **II) Elimination (*Pahāna*)**

Elimination is the removal of bad thoughts that have already arisen in the mind. If after the practice of prevention as above, any emotional excitement remains in the mind, it is due to carrying a memory of something that happened in the past, which produces the emotional excitement. This is called carrying a “memory image.” The emotional excitement can be removed by **withdrawing** our attention away from this memory image.

In order to do so we may begin to focus our mind on a different image, which is the opposite of the present image. For example if the original image was the image of an enemy, we can focus our attention on the image of a friend. If that is

difficult we can make a telephone call to that friend and speak to the friend. If a telephone is not available, we can write a letter to the friend, even if we may not mail it. If the friend is available close by, we can even visit the friend and speak to the friend. This is the kind of help a counsellor can give to a disturbed client.

This is analogous to watching a television program and upon seeing unwholesome content appearing, one changes the television channel to another channel with more wholesome content.



The Vitakka-santhana Sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, which was given in translation in the book on Level I meditation shows five methods of dealing with this problem. Reference to this passage may be helpful at this stage. Let us now refer to the instructions given by the Buddha about elimination.

“Herein a Bhikkhu does not accept a sensual thought, a malign thought, or cruel thought that has arisen from memory, but rejects it, expels it, makes an end of it, drives it out of

renewed occurrence. One does not admit evil, unprofitable states of mind that arise from time to time, from memory, but rejects them, expels them, makes an end of them, and drives them out of renewed occurrence.”

If one practices the above two exercises – **Prevention** (*saṅvara*), **Elimination** (*pahāna*) conscientiously, it is possible that at least the first Ecstasy (*jhāna*) can be reached yet this purity of mind is only temporary. It can be polluted, and therefore it is unstable. It is only by practicing the next two exercises **Cultivation** (*bhāvanā*), and **Maintenance** (*anurakkhana*) that it can be brought to the point that it can never be polluted.

### **The sequence of events that lead to Ecstasy (jhāna):**

1. When one practices conscientiously (*appamattassa viharatō*)
2. One begins to experience freedom from remorse (*pāmujaṇ jāyati*)
3. Freedom from remorse into rapture (*pāmuditassa pīti jāyati*)
4. On experiencing the cognitive satisfaction the body relaxes (*pīti manassa kāyaṇ passambhati*)
5. The relaxed body feels comfortable (*passaddha kāyo sukhaṇ vēdiyati*)
6. When the body is comfortable affective stillness or equilibrium is experienced (*sukhino cittaṇ samādhiyati*). This is the first ecstasy (*jhāna*).
7. When the mind is in equilibrium, Dhamma appears. (*samāhite citte dhammaṇ pātubhavo*) This means the First Ecstasy develops to the Second, Third and Fourth

and brings about Apperception (*Upekkha*) This means, the mind begins to understand how things come to be (*samāhite cite yathabhutan pajanati*). Brings about this is to focus on how one experiences, instead of on what one experiences. This results in a paradigm shift from **existence** to **experience**. In other words, the mind becomes aware of the Antecedental Concurrence which explains how the world and the self and suffering comes into being, and also how it ceases to be. Seeing this is the liberation from existence (*Bhava Nirodha*) (*paticca samuppada*).

### III) Cultivation (*Bhāvanā*)

This part of the exercise will be emphasised only at the advanced retreat because this is the cultivation of the “Seven Steps to Awakening” (*satta bojjhanga*), which is the main practice at the advanced retreat.

**Cultivation** is the systematic cultivation of calm introspection unhindered by emotional arousal. This is achieved by firstly withdrawing attention from external objects and memories, as it was done at the first two exercises above, and secondly focusing attention on the experience within, which is the emotional reaction to external objections and memories. This means focusing attention on the emotional reaction to an object, rather than focusing attention on an object to which one reacts. This will also be practiced during this retreat, although the main focus on this practice will be at the Level III retreat.

The reaction to the object, which we focus on in this exercise, is in four stages:

1. Physical manifestation of the reaction in the body – (*kāyānupassanā*).

2. Sensual manifestation of the reaction as a feeling in the body – (*vedanānupassanā*).
3. Affective manifestation of the reaction as anger, fear, or lust – (*cittānupassanā*).
4. Cognitive manifestation of the reaction as the interpretation of circumstances – (*dhammānupassanā*).

In observing the reaction, we first observe the active phase or the physical manifestation of the reaction. It can be seen as movements of the body, the movement of breathing, and tension in the body.

Next we observe the reaction as sensations in the body such as comfortable, uncomfortable or neutral sensations. Tension is felt as an uncomfortable sensation. Relaxation is felt as a comfortable sensation. All movements of the body can be felt as neutral sensations.

Thirdly we observe the emotional states or moods (*citta*). We watch for the kind of emotion carried in the mood? Is it anger, fear, lust, or worry?

At the fourth stage we observe the thought that started the emotion. It is the thought that interpreted and gave meaning to what occurred outside in a particular circumstance. That meaning is what started the emotion. That is what needs to be seen and changed.

At first we change the mood by broadening our mind. This means we begin to see the other person's point of view, or inquire into other possible ways of interpreting the same situation. This is taking a broader perspective.

As we advance, however, we begin to become aware of the fact that our interpretation is only a concept and not a truth.



We begin to examine how a concept is formed. As our mind calms down, we are able to observe the process of perception, by which we form the concept. We then realize that there are no truths in the world other than mere concepts, which may be logical or illogical. Even a logical concept is only a concept and not a truth. Therefore we do not need to take any concept too seriously. There are only good concepts and bad concepts. Good concepts bring happiness to oneself and others, and bad concepts bring unhappiness to oneself and others.

**The seven steps in awakening (*satta bojjhanga*):**

- 1) Systematic Introspection (*Satipaṭṭhāna*)
- 2) Examination of Experience (*dhamma vicaya*)
- 3) Gaining of Cognitive Strength (*virīya*)
- 4) Cognitive Satisfaction (*pīti*)
- 5) Physical Relaxation (*passaddhi*)
- 6) Affective Equilibrium (*samādhi*)
- 7) Apperception (*upekkhā*)

“Herein a meditator cultivates the seven steps towards awakening (*satta bojjhanga*) that begins with **Systematic Introspection** (*Satipaṭṭhāna*) which can only be achieved through solitude (*viveka*), dispassion (*virāga*), and tranquility (*nirodha*) ending in emancipation (*vossagga*).

As one cultivates Systematic introspection conscientiously, examination of cognitive interpretation (*dhamma vicaya*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and tranquility, ending in emancipation.

Then one cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Cognitive Strength** (*virīya*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and tranquility, ending in emancipation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Cognitive Satisfaction** (*pīti*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and tranquility, ending in emancipation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Relaxation** (*passaddhi*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and Physical tranquility, ending in emancipation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Affective Equilibrium** (*samādhi*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and tranquility, ending in emancipation.

One cultivates the step towards awakening that is **Apperception** (*upekkhā*) associated with solitude, dispassion, and tranquility, ending in emancipation.”

( *Bojjhanga Samyutta* )

#### IV) Maintenance (*Anurakkhana*)

The effort to **maintain** the state of calm and relaxation is the effort to keep focusing on what is going on within the body and the mind, instead of focusing on external objects. What is going on within is the reaction to the object perceived. This inward focus must be maintained through out the day.

When we focus on external objects we react to them. When we take our attention away from them, the reaction stops and we calm down. When we become constantly conscious of the reaction, the stop is maintained because it cannot go on consciously. This is because the reaction can occur only unconsciously.

This practice has to be done every moment in our lives, while we are in the four postures:

1. Walking
2. Standing
3. Sitting
4. Lying down

In other words, it is to be done every moment during the waking life, from the time one wakes up till one falls asleep. As one keeps on practising this way, the mind calms down and the body relaxes. The practice turns into a habit. This results in mental happiness and physical comfort. This tranquil state of mind and body can be developed into the first ecstasy. This state of deep tranquillity could be further developed gradually into the Four Ecstasies (*jhāna*).

When one enters the fourth ecstasy by maintaining this purity and tranquility of mind, the mind becomes focused internally (*upekkha*). Then it becomes possible for the meditator to become aware of how one perceives, or the process of perception itself, in the form of the five constituents of perception (*panca khanda*):

1. Mental Images (*Rūpa*)
2. Feelings (*Vedanā*)
3. Sensations (*Saññā*)
4. Mental Constructions (*Sankhāra*)
5. Perceptions (*Viññāna*)

When the constituents of perception are perceived, what one perceives are the stages in the process of perception, which are commonly personalized as “mine.” The subjective process

of perception is normally personalized while the object of perception is normally alienated as not mine.

Insight is gained when one is able to recognize that these stages in the process of perception are dependent on conditions and are therefore impersonal processes. This way one begins to see the impersonality of all phenomena. Then one begins to see that personalization of these impersonal phenomena only leads to suffering. It is in this way that the value of depersonalization is recognized. This makes one dispassionate and thereby one loses one's personality perspective.

Although one has lost one's personality perspective, one is still aware of one's "feeling of self" that accompanies tension in the muscles and sensations that arise from them. Though there is no real "self" the "feeling of self" is still present. This is due to emotions that produce tensions. The constant awareness and observation of these feelings of self associated with emotions and tension helps one gradually reduce the "feeling of self." From here on it becomes a constant awareness of emotions and the "feeling of self." This leads to constant relaxed happy living, and good pleasant behaviour, which also brings happiness to others around.

## 5) Harmonious Attention (*sammā-sati*)

Harmonious attention is not mere "mindfulness," where one pays attention to whatever one does or perceives. It is **withdrawing** attention from **objects perceived** through the senses, and **focusing** attention on the **emotional reaction** to the object perceived, which is going on inside the body, and not outside. The real meaning of the term *satipaṭṭhāna* (*sati+upatthana*) is the withdrawal of attention from external

surroundings and focusing attention on what is going on inside (*parimukan satīṇ upatthapetva*).

It is important to understand the purpose of our meditation, which is to stop reacting emotionally to what we perceive. We must understand that this reaction is going on unconsciously. A desire or hatred that comes up is not a conscious action we perform. It happens without our knowing how it occurred. This “harmonious attention” is to become conscious of the unconscious reaction, so that the **unconscious** reaction stops when made **conscious**.

We must understand that we are **organisms** in an **environment**. The organism reacts quite unconsciously to stimulation by the environment. This reaction creates a **conflict** between the organism and the environment. This conflict is the distress or **insecurity** (*dukkha*) that the Buddha spoke of, and that we all suffer from. Our aim is to **resolve this conflict** and bring about **harmony** through the “harmonious attention.”

So this harmonious attention is keeping the attention focused inwards or introverted, so that we become aware of the reaction that is going on within us. This reaction consists of four parts: 1) perception, 2) interpretation, 3) emotional arousal, 4) and action to release tension.

But we can become aware of it only in four other stages, starting from the body rather than the mind, which are:

1. **Body awareness** (*kāyānupassanā*).

This is awareness of what is going on in the body, in the form of the heart beating, hands shaking, muscle tension, rapid breathing, perspiration, etc.

2. **Sensation awareness** (*vedanānupassanā*)

This is awareness of how one feels in the body, whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

3. **Mood awareness** (*cittānupassanā*)

This is awareness of the emotion present in the mood, or the calmness of the mood, or whatever be the nature of the mood.

4. **Thought awareness** (*dhammānupassanā*)

This is awareness of the thoughts that interpreted one's circumstances, to which one reacted or not.

The fourfold exercise (*sammappadhāna*), when practiced diligently, purifies and tranquilizes the mind and brings the mind to a state of equilibrium or mental repose (*samādhi*).

“Here the meditator abides seeing the body as body, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing sensations as sensations, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing emotions as emotions, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.

One abides seeing thoughts as thoughts, diligent, aware and attentive avoiding the attraction and repulsion associated with objects perceived.”

*(Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta)*